

university, tech school. This of course requires that the Guard member must have the remaining three years in his enlistment. The other part, there would be full tuition benefits paid to the spouse and children of any Guard member that was killed while on active duty. Of course, there is a stipulation that the spouse must use this within ten years and no payment would be made to a child over 25 years of age. Now, the part that comes in now of course is for the \$100 bonus and this is the Governor's 933, to be used specifically in low recruitment areas. Now I think that after the tremendous flooding that we had out here at Valley, I think that we all realize the importance of the National Guard and I for one feel that we as a Legislature should try and do what we can to help them on their recruitment. With that as the explanation as to what the bill does and tries to do, with that I would ask for the advancement of LB 564.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: Chair recognizes Senator Simon.

SENATOR SIMON: Mr. President, members of the body. I want to apologize in advance for the sound of my voice, it may be harsh on the ears but I hope none the less that you will listen to the comments that I have to make. As a member of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, I travelled around the state with Senator Rasmussen and we held three public hearings dealing with this subject. The subject matter was the problem the National Guard was having with recruitment and retention, that they were down low in their figures. Senator Rasmussen, certainly I as well as anybody in this body knows about the importance of a strong National Guard, having seen the evidence of what they have done in Valley, Nebraska and in other areas of my district. I want to make it very clear that I support entirely as strong a National Guard as we can possibly have. I do, however, disagree with you regarding your particular approach as to how best serve the National Guard in terms of recruiting and retention, specifically regarding 564. I think that it is important for members of the body to understand that when these hearings were held across the state I asked the question at each one of the hearings, when the people were not going to renew, when they were quitting, were they interviewed, were they asked why they quit? The answer was "No, Senator Simon, we did not." So, we really don't know whether or not people quit the Nebraska National Guard because of the pay, because they didn't like their commander, because they didn't like the hours, because they didn't like the working conditions, because they didn't like the training. We have absolutely no idea or understanding why they quit. Yet here we come before the legislature with a bill, an idea, it may not be the best one around but it is one, and we are going to use it. Now I specifically refer to a copy which I handed out today and I hope that if you don't look at it today you will take a look at it sometime before the bill comes up again. This report, and this is the interesting part of this report, this report was prepared by the U. S. National Guard, January, 1977. The report deals in what motivated people to stay, conversely what did not motivate people so that they turned around and left. On page 2 II, number 5, the current pay scale is not a problem area. It is not a deterrent to retention. Guardsmen view pay